



L'ESPIRIT DE OUABACHE

Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission

President's Report

Norman "Lucky" Neiburger, President



2003

Time flies when you're working hard and making progress. The Commission has been busy meeting with state legislators to communicate the important work the Commission has achieved and to ensure that the work can continue. Major accomplishments for 2002 include two new additions, an Executive Director and an office. Susan Benner was hired in April 2002 to fill the new role of the Executive Director. This is exciting not only because it represents a lot of hard work that went into creating this position but also it opens up new opportunities for the Commission to develop. Susan's roles includes providing a day-to-day Commission presence for local communities, maintaining effective communications and working relationships with cooperators and partners, research funding opportunities, and implementing and developing projects that advance the mission of the Commission. As a result of hiring an Executive Director the Commission now has an office in downtown Lafayette. The newly acquired office space provides the Commission with a central contact location and increased visibility.

The Commission is currently updating the Corridor Management Plan for the Heritage

Corridor that was originally distributed in 1993. Public meetings were held to update the plan. The rough draft will be made available for public comment and review in the spring of this year and the final draft available in the fall. The participation and input that was provided during our public meetings were greatly appreciated and we look forward to that same level of enthusiasm when reviewing the rough draft of the plan. Additional information about the Corridor Management Plan will be made available on our website www.in.gov/wrhcc so please check it out periodically.

The Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission was also able, through Susan's good work, to reprint the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Brochure. A total of 100,000 brochures were reprinted through a grant administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources - Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology. The brochure highlights travel information, natural features, and the history along the river. To receive a copy of this brochure, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to our office.

As always please remember to promote, protect and enjoy the wonderful Wabash!

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Improvements in Fairbanks Park, Terre Haute

submitted by Rita Coleman

Long awaited, and much needed improvements to one of Terre Haute's most popular parks became a reality through grants from the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Funds, and the Department of Natural Resources. These grants made possible a much needed renovation of the Amphitheater in Fairbanks Park, which overlooks the peaceful and idyllic Wabash River as it flows by the park, and the River Walk Project, which transformed a small narrow sidewalk into a beautiful and accessible scenic walkway that also meanders through Fairbanks Park at the rivers edge.

With the new improvements to the Fairbanks Park Amphitheater requests for events and activities at that facility have increased, including concerts by the Terre Haute Community Band, Terre Haute Symphony, and the Terre Haute Youth Symphony. The Vigo County School Corporation is another agency that utilizes the amphitheater, with seating for a thousand people this facility is a perfect venue for their annual summer musical production. Other community service agen-

cies, local businesses, churches, local and area Boy and Girl Scouts also hold events in Fairbanks Park. During the early spring months several festivals are held in Fairbanks Park, including the 10 day Wabash Valley Festival, and the annual pre-Mothers Day Herb Faire.

Requests have been made for use of the Amphitheater for several summer weddings, antiques car shows, company picnics, and more. On most any given day, you can drive, or walk through the park using the beautiful River Walk and see several impromptu events taking place by the fountain, in one of the shelters, or just under one of the magnificent trees that offer a welcome rest spot.

Visit Terre Haute and Fairbanks Park. Once you see these awesome new additions and improvements you will understand why the Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department is so excited about the facilities, and grateful for the grants from the WRHCF that assisted with these projects.

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The Paul Dresser's Birthplace on the Banks of the Wabash River

submitted by Marylee Hagan

A personally signed photograph in the collection of the Vigo County Historical Society notes "For my brother Ed, Place where I was born "On the Banks of the Wabash" Terre Haute, Ind. Paul Dresser."

Using that photograph as a guideline, the restoration of Dresser's birthplace was completed in January, 2001. The work was made possible, in part, through a \$55,000 grant from the year 2000 Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund and administered by the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

The 1850s house, which stands just 200 yards from the Wabash River in Fairbanks Park, is not only the birthplace of the author of the Indiana State Song, "On the Banks of the Wabash", it is also significant as one of the few "house muse-

ums" that represent a pre-Civil War working class home.

In 1967 the Indiana General Assembly designated the home a State Shrine and Memorial, and the National Music Council listed it as "A Landmark of American Music." The home is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

A grand re-opening of the house was held on the evening of May 10th, 2002, with tours of the house and an old fashioned dessert of homemade pie and lemonade.

The complete restoration of both the exterior and interior of the home would not have been possible without the generous grant from the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund. Thanks to the grant and the generosity of individuals and businesses of the Wabash Valley, this "little gem" on the banks of the Wabash River will be enjoyed by generations to come.



Update to the Chief Richardville

House Project

submitted by Randy Elliott

Work continues on the restoration of the historic Miami Chief Richardville House in Fort Wayne. The property is under the care of the Allen County/Fort Wayne Historical Society. This restoration is funded in part by the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission.

The oldest house in northern Indiana is slowly yielding information about its appearance during the occupancy of Richardville (1827-1841). The first priority was to remove sections of the stucco, which had covered the building for the last 80 or more years. By removing these sections missing trim outlines could be seen and other clues analyzed to reveal further details to the original size of the building. A full-scale exterior restoration is planned for this spring.

The house, one of the oldest Greek Revivals in Indiana was constructed as a provision of the Treaty of Paradise Springs near Wabash. Construction costs totaled twenty two hundred dollars, a large sum of money for the time period. The long-term goal for the Society is to open the house focusing on the life of Chief Richardville and his impact on Indiana history.



View from the Banks

submitted by Bernie Dahl

I always look forward to the Wabash in winter. I have the privilege of viewing about a four-mile stretch of the Wabash almost everyday on my way to and from work. I don't live or work on the Wabash and I don't make my living by using or in any way harvesting the resources of the Wabash. But I do draw much inspiration from it on my daily visits. On days when the river is calm and serene, I draw from it some calm for my day. When it's wind-thrown waves are wild and energetic, I grab some enthusiasm on my way to work. And when the sun glistens off the glassy surface, I look forward to a bright day. The Wabash doesn't dictate my attitude; it helps me adjust.

But with all the various scenes displayed along the river, winter has the best. The winter Wabash can be calm or especially wild. The sun rises across the water even more beautifully in winter. Maybe it's the visibility. With no leaves on the trees, the river is much more visible through the veil of branches. Actually it's the ice. I love the ice; it's one more dimension to the character of the river. Some ice freezes smoothly on the quiet edges of the river and there are often some very large chunks crashing along, but the best ice phenomenon is the formation of crystalline 'lily pads'. These roundish discs of thin ice have jagged turned up edges created by the bumping action of the fragile pieces as they move downstream. They're like water clouds beckoning you to become weightless. Climb on for a magical ride.

Visit our Website at:
www.in.gov/wrhcc

Canal Volunteers Rally to Construct Exhibits

submitted by Dan McCain

When the Canal Association began receiving donated land a decade ago, volunteers rallied and began building what now is a treasure for the Delphi community. Now the nearly completed seven miles of trails leads to more things for volunteers to do. Skills like the volunteers exhibited three years ago when the 1873 Iron Bridge was moved from Camden and rehabilitated have proved that many people are ready, willing and able to complete meaningful projects.

"Now as we are busy constructing the Canal Interpretive Center's exhibits, we need more able craftsmen to work with us," stated Dan McCain, coordinator of the volunteers. "We have fun and find working together is a pleasant challenge.

The core of our group are mostly retired but that doesn't hamper several that are not" he added. The Canal and Trails have benefited from thousands of hours from people of all ages in the past decade.

The Canal Association acquired the free use of a large warehouse that was used three years ago for the indoor restoration of



the 1873 wrought iron bridge from Camden. This space allowed ample floor area to layout the many large and small displays and exhibits for assembly. It is now possible for the volunteers to work some days inside the new building and when that is not possible one of the board members has a large heated workshop where many exhibits are being built currently. It is rewarding to be a volunteer and create many of these displays. Items like the full-scale lock are being replicated. Old style wood crafting of the timber joints has been a learning experience to those that have been involved as apprentices.

"As the exhibit building interior construction comes into full swing we are working mostly with wood. Some of the structural supporting members of items, like the full scale canal boat cabin started out on a steel frame," McCain stated. The cabin was suspended on unseen multiple industrial strength air bags to give the deck a feeling of being on water. The realism of these exhibits when installed in late spring will bring more curiosity from the public as they visit the Interpretive Center this summer.

Anyone interested in joining the ranks as a volunteer and especially those that have old time woodworking skills should contact Dan McCain at 765-564-6297.

Little River Wetlands Project

submitted by Mary Berghoff

Imagine, if you will, a twenty square mile wetland in Allen County with tens of thousands of ducks, geese, and swans stopping by every spring and summer. Rare plants and animals such as orchids, black terns, and otters abound in this area.

This is exactly what the Little River Wetlands area was like 150 years ago. Southwest of Fort Wayne and extending all the way to Huntington, the Little River was a short stream that encompassed a tremendous wetlands complex.

In the progressive attitude of the day, the river was ditched and straightened and the wetlands were drained in what was the largest and most aggressive drainage project in all of Indiana. A tour of the area will show some of this area's deepest ditches. The banks of some of them are diked and the water is actually pumped up into them to accomplish the necessary drainage.

Currently, the area is farmed with some remnant wetlands still remaining. Fox Island County Park is located near the east end of the area providing a sample of what the area was like and could be again.

The Little River Wetlands Project is committed to protecting the remaining wetlands and restoring some sections. They are currently working on a trail from Fox Island to a wetland area that has been restored along Yohne Road. They have also purchased 100 acres of land near the town of Aboite that will be easily restored to a nice wetland area and will become home to an abundance of wildlife.

Contact the Little River Wetland Project at 260-434-0728 or www.lrwp.org. Little River Wetland Project is always looking for support and invite you to become a member.

Shawnee Bottoms Bodine

submitted by Sue Ulrich

NICHES Land Trust is dedicating their new Shawnee Bottoms Bodine Tract on Saturday, March 8, 2003 at 10 a.m. The property is located along the Wabash River about a half mile north of the town of Fountain (once Portland) in Fountain County on Covered Bridge Road. The property is 220 acres in size with approximately one and a half miles of frontage along the Wabash River. The property has a 2-acre spring-fed wet seep and a 6-acre pond. Approximately 50 acres are forested.

The Wabash and Erie Canal once crossed the Shawnee Bottoms property. Remnants of the towpath are still present. This segment of the towpath was used by a railroad as a right of way

after the Canal was abandoned in the late 1800's. The rail line was abandoned in turn during the 1930's. A tour of the property will follow the dedication ceremony.

Ducks Unlimited is partnering with NICHES to replant the bottomland acres as lowland forest. One of the upland fields will become a warm season grass nursery. The seeds from the nursery will be harvested and used for restoration work on other NICHES properties. For more information or to become involved with NICHES projects email sueandtedulrich@msn.com or visit the NICHES website at www.NICHESlandtrust.org.

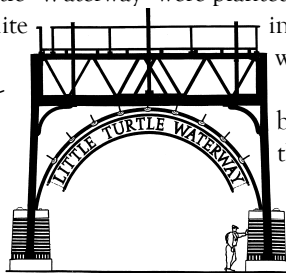
Little Turtle Waterway

submitted by Mercedes Brugh

Logansport's Little Turtle Waterway (LTW) was expanded in 2002, thanks to the generosity of the Lilly Endowment and the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund.

The Lilly Endowment awarded \$128,000.00 for the completion of the grand entrance into the Little Turtle Waterway Plaza, which includes a railroad crossing and granite medallions by Miami artist Cathy Nagy-Mowry.

The Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund contributed a total of \$175,000.00 toward completion of an urban trail along the Wabash River. Matched with money contributed by the City of Logansport and more money raised by LTW Corp., the grant funded the difficult and delicate work of building the trail under a bridge and through narrow riverbank spaces. People enjoying this downtown trail can now travel four blocks along the Wabash without having to cross a street.



Landscaping with native plants along Little Turtle Waterway will mean minimal maintenance over the years. LTW Corp. volunteers spend four mornings each year removing invasive species and managing natives. Areas disturbed by construction were planted with native grasses. These grasses got a good start in 2002, and should start overcoming the invasive weeds in 2003.

LTW Corp. has also secured a grant from the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund for enhancing the trail. The volunteers are currently working on the design for benches, lights, an overlook, and stairs from a highway bridge down to the trail. LTW Corp. hopes to bid the job in the spring of 2003.

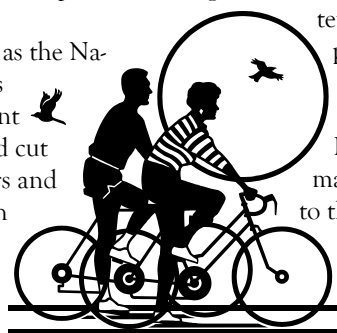
Where the River Meets the Road—On the Rails

submitted by Marlene Lu

Transportation arteries have long given Indiana its reputation as the "Crossroads of America." In Vigo County, where the National Road – Indiana's premier east-west route since 1840 – meets the Wabash River – Indiana's main water artery dating back through eons of time – railroads also made their mark, crisscrossing the region like sections of a patchwork quilt. The River, Road and the Rails have cut the paths of our local history with everything from covered wagons and carts, to bicycles and motor cars; from canoes and steamboats, to motorboats and hovercraft; along with plush Pullmans of the past to full cargo in today's railcars.

But now a new phenomenon, known as the National Road Heritage Trail, has made its way into the locale, continuing to cement links to our past, present and future and cut paths, only this time with walkers, bikers and skaters. On October 5, 2002, the ribbon was cut on the completion of Phase I, officially opening the trail on an old railroad bed. Paralleling the National Road, or U.S. 40, the project, when complete in 2005, will cover 12.8 miles.

One of the trailheads is a former rest area being given a new lease on life. Twigg Rest Area served travelers on the Road from 1935 until 1976, when a new interstate system enticed travelers to faster routes. Twigg's, as it is affectionately known, is currently developed with paved parking, a trail entrance, bicycle racks and an information board. Eventually a restroom facility, playground area, picnic shelter and other pedestrian and bicycle amenities are to be included. It is the only rest area of yesteryear known to be refurbished in this way, and now serves two purposes along this National Scenic Byway.



Phase I links the trailhead with Rose-Hulman Institute, Hawthorne Park and the J.I. Case Wetlands, the historic Highland Lawn Cemetery, and Indiana State University Memorial Stadium with Downtown Terre Haute. Phase II will connect the trail at 13th & Spruce streets to the corner of 4th & Cherry streets, crossing the Indiana State University campus while linking the trail even more with Downtown Terre Haute. It will continue by the city/county government campus and enter near the base of the Paul Dresser Bridge into Fairbanks Park. Within the park, the already completed Riverwalk and new Amphitheater, children's playground and boat ramps will provide a perfect trailhead along the banks of the Wabash.

Scheduled construction on Phase II will begin in spring 2003 and should be complete by fall of the same year. A Phase III plan is in the works to link the trail to the city's major parks at Deming and Dobbs Nature Center. The cost to the city of Terre Haute will be about \$526,000. Federal and state grants will cover the remainder of the \$2.6 million project. Newly completed projects in Fairbanks Park were accomplished with the assistance of Wabash River Heritage Corridor grants.

As faced by other municipalities, the idea had its detractors since its inception was announced in 1992. But although the project was seemingly bogged down in a quagmire of political bureaucracy and rhetoric, persistence finally won out. The newest treasure of the Terre Haute Parks and Recreation system will lend much to the recreational, environmental, and social quality of life in Vigo County while allowing us to keep in touch with our historical roots. The "Crossroads of America" remains a reality here, especially now that the rails allow the River and the Road to meet again.

Archeological Preservation of the Bone Bank

submitted by Cheryl Munson

"Bone Bank?" The name alone strikes the imagination. This prehistoric, or pre-European contact, Native American archaeological site became a historic landmark in Indiana. In the early 1800s, travelers on the Wabash River in Posey County, in the far southwestern part of the state, saw many human burials washing out of the river bank, hence the site's name. As the river channel meandered, houses and artifacts were also eroded away. The first archaeological

"excavations" in Indiana were carried out at this site in 1828 by a French naturalist, Charles Alexandre Lesueur, while he was based in New Harmony. Lesueur's work was not scientific by modern standards, but he was

one of the first scholars to dismiss the mythic "Moundbuilders" as the prehistoric inhabitants of southern Indiana and to give credit to the Native Americans who lived here prior to the arrival of Europeans and Euroamerican settlers. By 1900, residents and scholars thought that Bone Bank had been washed away.

Luckily, this was not the case. In the 1980s, citizens of Posey County reported discoveries of artifacts at Bone Bank. Subsequent field inspections documented that fragments of pottery were still present and washing out of the bank. During periods of low river levels in 1997-1999, Cheryl Ann Munson of Indiana University directed archaeological surveys and test excavations at the

site, thanks to a Historic Preservation Fund grant from the National Park Service (administered by the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology) and the support of the landowners and many residents of the region. The IU research team confirmed that Bone Bank was one of four large villages of the late prehistoric Caborn-Welborn culture. This Mississippian culture occupied the mouth of the Wabash region during A.D. 1400-1700, after Angel Mounds was abandoned but



before Pioneer settlement. Survey of the steep river bank and testing showed that the main part of the Bone Bank village, including houses and cemeteries,

had washed away. However, village refuse deposits and food remains – burned plants and animal bones – still survived in deep deposits that had been covered over by flood-deposited silts. Also, several deep cooking and storage pit features were discovered. But time was running out. The site was eroding more with every flood, and already about 99% of the village had been lost.

In 2000 and 2001, the IU research team conducted *rescue excavations* in three areas of the site. This study was supported by a grant from the Wabash River Heritage Corridor program and by regional organizations and individuals. The Four Rivers Resource, Conservation, and Development Area, Inc. ad-

ministered this grant. Many volunteers assisted in the project including faculty and students from Indiana University-Bloomington, University of Southern Indiana, University of Evansville, and Indiana State University, plus local citizens. Excavations revealed only a few additional features, but samples excavated in the refuse deposits held a wealth of information: about the crops people grew and the wild plants they collected; equipment used for hunting and fishing; types of pottery and other objects; how artifact styles compare to other sites; and types of materials received in trade. Radiocarbon dates place the Bone Bank village at about A.D. 1400-1450. The villagers occupied a prime location for people who lived as farmers, gatherers, fishermen, and hunters, situated next to a backwater lake, which served as their fish market, and the Wabash River, which was their superhighway to distant trading partners. But the meandering Wabash River forced the Bone Bank villagers to leave their homes when the river channel moved toward the residences and changed the environment by breaching the bank of the lake. The Bone Bank villagers left to join other nearby communities, or perhaps to establish a new settlement. Archaeologists have recently learned that several nearby villages of the Caborn-Welborn culture continued to be occupied after A.D. 1450. Perhaps detailed studies of decorated pottery and fabrics (which are preserved as impressions) will reveal the closest links between Bone Bank and other sites, and give us clues about community abandonment and resettlement.

More Trail, Less Trash

NICHES Land Trust's Pecan Basin Cates-Clawson Reserve in Fountain County now sports a mowed loop trail all the way to the Wabash River. Even better, there's no longer piles of scattered trash to greet people when they get there. On a workday, fourteen NICHES volunteers spent the day putting in the trail and picking up seven pickup loads of trash that had accumulated along the river in the vicinity of an old fishing cabin. Included in that trash were three rusted out refrigerators and five layers of shingles removed from the roof of the collapsed cabin. Pecan Basin is a 155-acre property bought in 2000 with funds from a Wabash River Heritage Corridor Grant. Several interpretive signs are in the works to be placed along the trails.

submitted by Sue Ulrich



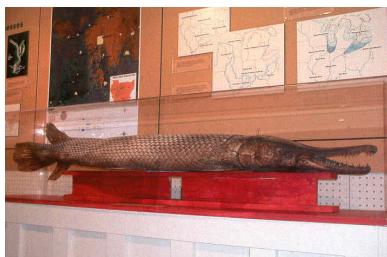
Harmony on the Wabash

In the fall of 2000, the New Harmony Working Men's Institute received a grant from the Wabash River Corridor Heritage Fund, and began the work of finding a group to make our dream of an exhibit about the Wabash River a reality. After following all steps prescribed by the rules of our grant, we settled on a team from, of all places, the shores of Lake Superior.

Although the Wabash River and Lake Superior have little in common, these people brought with them a great love for our nation's water resources, and a great depth of maritime knowledge. Pat Labadie, designer and fabricator of the exhibit, served as director of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Lake Superior Maritime Museum in Duluth, MN from 1973 until his retirement in 2000. Hope McLeod and Bruce Bowers, who made the film to accompany the exhibit, are musicians and songwriters who have lived and performed in the Lake Superior area for many years.

Their plan for the exhibit caught our imaginations as it took the form of a steamboat, right down to the captain's house and the smokestacks. With an original mural painted by Clem Penrose seen from the outside as though the river

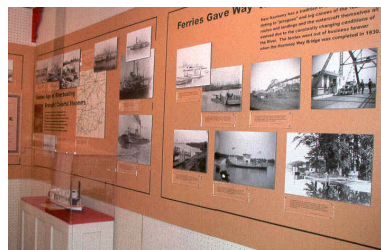
is being reflected in the captain's house windows, you are aware that a special experience is ahead even before you enter the exhibit.



entertains, and prepares visitors for their walk through Harmony on the Wabash. The film and the exhibit look at life along the Wabash at New Harmony from the earliest times to the present.

New Harmony's unique history is only a chapter in this story in which the river is the star. We begin with the forming of the river in prehistoric times. The Native Americans who lived on these shores are discussed, as are the earliest European settlers, including the Harmonists and the Owenites. One of the most interesting segments to the public is the steamboat era. Many people are not aware that the Wabash enjoyed a period of lively steamboat traffic in the 1800's. Next the mussel industry

Upon entering, there is a fifteen-minute video that compliments the exhibit. With original music and excellent narration, it informs,



submitted by Sherry Graves

is explored. It was big business in this area at one time. Finally, we take a look at the river today and look to its future.

We are very proud of the scholarship that went into the making of this exhibit. Today our archive stores several boxes of materials gathered by the team as they researched this project. We are also proud of the fact that we were able to use many of our artifacts in the exhibit. These include, items from the Caborn-Welborn Indians such as pottery and projectile points, the wheel from the old Harmonist grist mill that stood on the banks of a tributary stream that later became the main channel of the river, a small steam engine, mussel

shells, and an alligator gar that had languished in our attic for many years.

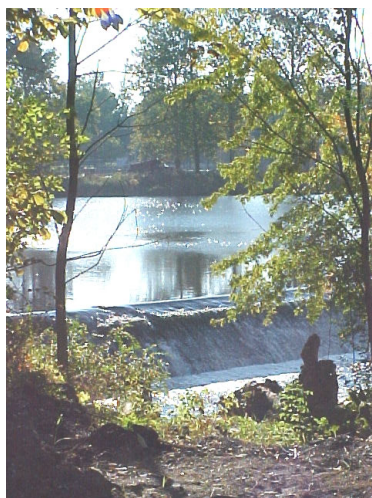
We believe that this exhibit will help people appreciate the importance of the Wabash River in the develop-

ment of this region. But even more, we hope it will encourage our visitors to value the water resources in the areas in which they live and see that our rivers and lakes are as important to our future as they were in our past.

Cass County Trails Partnership

Cass County trail users are benefiting from a unique partnership between the Memorial Hospital Foundation and Little Turtle Waterway Corp. While LTW Corp's construction has been on the Wabash in downtown Logansport, the Hospital Foundation has begun trail work along the Eel River. The public trails will support the Foundation's mission of promoting community health.

The Foundation has secured over 40 acres of wooded land adjoining the Eel River, and volunteers have already cleared a former rail bed parallel to the river that is 1.3



submitted by Mercedes Brugh

miles long. The Foundation has secured a grant for repairing bridges and adding crushed stone. Construction is slated for 2003.

The two groups recently cooperated on a master plan for trails in Cass County. The Eel River flows into the Wabash in downtown Logansport, and the vision is to connect the two trail projects into a larger system. Local government boards and commissions also participated in the planning process.

Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission

102 North Third St., Suite 302
Lafayette, IN 47901

Phone: 765-427-1505
www.in.gov/wrhcc

Address service requested

2003 Issue



2003 Wabash Corridor Events

Riverside Skating Center Ice skating rink open until Mar 23, 2003, weather permitting. West Lafayette, 800-872-6648

Heritage Week Apr 21–26, Atheneum/Visitors Center Grounds, New Harmony, 812-682-4488

Spirit of Vincennes, Rendezvous May 24 & 25, George Rogers Clark NHP, 812-882-1776

Merom Bluff Chautauqua Jun 6–8, Merom, Bluff Park, 812-356-4068

Canal Days Jul 4–5, Delphi, Canal Park, 765-564-6297

Wabash Riverfest Jul 12, West Lafayette, 765-447-9999

Wabash Herb Festival Aug 16, Wabash, Paradise Spring Park, 260-563-5153

Potawatomi Festival Sep 19 –21, Attica, Ouiabache Park, 765-764-4943

Forks of the Wabash Pioneer Festival Sep 27 –28, Huntington, Hier's Park, 260-359-8937

Feast of the Hunters' Moon Sept 13–14, Fort Ouiatenon, West Lafayette, 765-476-8402

Munster at Wabash Bluffs Nov 1–2, Fort Knox II Historical Site, Vincennes, 812-882-7422

For more information please visit www.EnjoyIndiana.com

Upcoming Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission Meetings (locations are tentative)

March 12	1:00 PM
Indianapolis	
May 14	1:00 PM
New Harmony, Posey County	
July 9	1:00 PM
Wabash, Wabash County	
September 10	1:00 PM
Warren County	
November 12	1:00 PM
Delphi, Carroll County	

Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of all odd numbered months at 1:00 pm

For more meeting information and locations, call 765-427-1505

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